Pass Christian Area 1699 1999
Colonization Tricentennial Committee

Pass Christian, Mississippi

The Tricentennial

Volume 2, Issue Eleven October 15, 1999

Lighthouse News

The City Council approved the site location for the Lighthouse in September and the Tricentennial Committee Board of Directors approved John Mykolyk as architect for the construction of the light and tower. The approved site is located in the west harbor parking lot of the northwest corner. Permit applications are being prepared to submit to the boards and agencies that are concerned with the construction site. A letter received from the Mississippi State Department of History and Archives has no objection with the site.

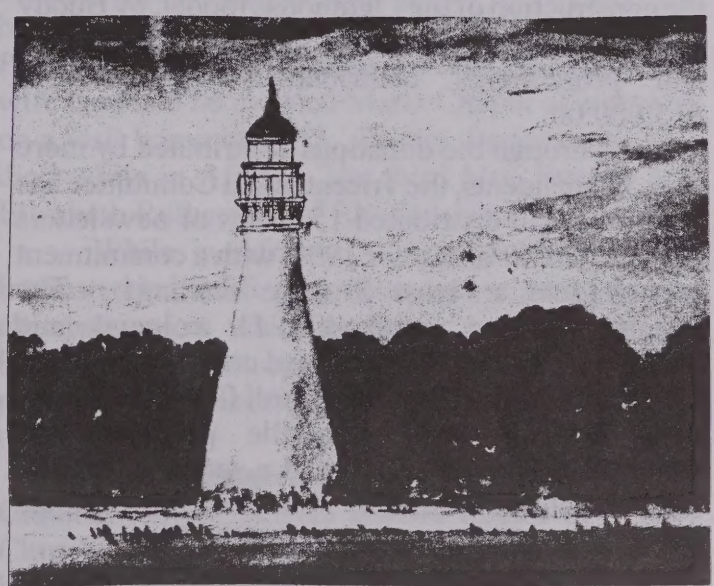
The necessary task of raising funds has been held somewhat in abeyance until having received this final City Council approval. Nevertheless, the Committee has been receiving a number of volunteered donations including $1000.00 from Mary Catherine Ward and $1000.00 from Robert Pundsack. There have been a number of people who have committed "substantial contributions" once they see the fund raising effort has materialized in earnest.

Funds already received amount to a little more than $8000.00, which are held in two separate checking accounts. Those who elect to contribute more than $100 and wish to benefit by a tax write-off, should make their gift payable to the **Rotary Trust Fund re: Pass Lighthouse,** while those that are contributing less than $100, should make checks payable to the *Tricentennial Committee.*

Join the P.C.L.S.

The *Pass Christian Lighthouse Society* will officially come into effect on January 1, 2000 with the responsibility of seeing the construction of the Lighthouse and be an ongoing organization to take care of all Lighthouse matters. In the mean time, the Tricentennial Committee is requesting membership dues of $50, or more, to initiate the *Founding Members* who will be recorded with the State Attorney General's Office with the Charter issuing. The Society will also distribute a Quarterly Newsletter to provide construction updates, event listings, and financial reportings.

The Pass Rotary Club has allowed the Tricentennial Committee to offer tax write-off benefits for contributors of $100 or more. Checks must be cut to the **Rotary Trust Fund**. Be sure to write in the "Pass Lighthouse " in the memo section of the check.



Pass Christian Lighthouse

The original painting of the above copy was rendered by M. Sanford. He was known in the Pass during the '70s for his heritage paintings that were included in several of the books written by Ronnie Caire. The Lighthouse is shown close to the beach where many folks originally thought it was located. In-depth research proved it to have been erected where the City Hall front lawn is today.

Y2K PARTY

Preparations are being made for a mid-January social gathering at the Espy Avenue Community Center. There will be food, drinks, music, and a few short speeches to welcome in the new year, the new millennium, and the new Lighthouse Society. The accomplishments established by the Tricentennial Committee during the past two years have set the stage for a successful launching of the Pass Christian Lighthouse Society.

During its existence, the Tricentennial Committee has provided a forum for monthly discussions by the Board of Directors and attending guests, two successful social galas, the first *Jazz in the Pass* festival, a winning Mardi Gras float, a clean-up of area cemeteries, and participation with other Club sponsored events.

Of special note were the contributions of the d'Iberville Bronze bust, by Michelle Smith; the d'Iberville Stone, by Brian Nettles; the painting of the Pass Christian Lighthouse, by Geri Dendis; and the construction of the Lighthouse model, by Buddy Diboll. The aggregate total value of these artistic and professional contributions is close to $15,000.00.

Through the donations contributed by more than 500 residents, the Tricentennial Committee has published and distributed 15 issues of newsletters in 1998, and 11 issues for 1999, with a commitment to complete at least 3 more mailings. The Committee also purchased 11 colonial and American flags that have formed our local heritage. In addition to lapel buttons, Mardi Gras doubloons, Jazz T-shirts, and d'Iberville pendants, the Committee has commissioned a series of official state "Historic Markers" that will be installed throughout 1999 and the year 2000.

There have been many wonderful volunteers who actively participated in the preparations and promotions of these events, programs, and projects, who have made worthy contributions of their time, talent, and personal monies.

Even with this foundation of community experienced leadership, new and renewed volunteers are invited to participate in the transformation to the Lighthouse Society, are invited to attend the remaining Tricentennial Committee Board of Directors meetings which are held on the third Tuesday of each month remaining in 1999, at City Hall, at 10 a.m.

Meeting the Train

by Arthur Grant

During the early 1930s, meeting the evening commuter train from New Orleans was a Pass ritual. There were two trains a day going to and from New Orleans and the Coast, two in the mornings and two in the evenings. The late train left New Orleans at 5:00 p.m. and arrived at the Pass at 7:00 p.m. This was the most popular train.

The Pass Christian Depot was a wooden building about sixty feet long by fifteen feet wide which stood immediately adjacent to a boarding platform that was packed with hard cinders stretching between Fleitas and Davis Avenues. Along side, was a dirt road connecting the two avenues. Adjacent, at the south of this dirt road, was a park with open space and a number of trees that presented an ambiance of peacefulness only interrupted by the occasional passing of a train. Breaking the solitude of the moment would be the blowing of the whistle, the streaming of smoke, and the driving cylinders that emitted steam as it passed along the path of the platform. There was the excitement of the wheels clicking over each joint in the tracks as the steam driven train, with hissing brakes, would screech to a halt before the passenger station.

The "commuter train" usually had five cars pulled by the engineer who would halt the engin sharply, so that at the station, there was one coach at its middle and two at each end. This left the last rail car sticking out the end of the station building on the Davis side. Waiting the train would be five or six automobiles at each end of the depot that would park along the boarding platform. Whiling the time of arrival, family members would either sit in their cars or alight to the platform to look down the track for the first glimpse of the train.

Upon the train's arrival, those on the west side were treated to a sight that made their wait worthwhile. Just as the locomotive hit the point where Davis Avenue crossed the tracks, a monumental foreign car, known as an *Isota Franchini,* would sweep down Davis, turn into the road to the station, and would run down to a point just behind the first group of parked cars to halt in the middle of the road. By this time, the train had slowed to a

walk, and hanging off the lowest boarding step of the last car, dressed in a white linen suit, cheerfully waving his straw *"boater"* to all and sundry, was Mr. Bluford Balter. Without waiting for the train to stop, he would spring from his perch, bound across the platform into the street, skirt the parked cars, and step up to the running board of the idling *Isota* to plant a resounding kiss on Mrs. Balter. Then, he would slide into the driver's seat, and with a sharp toot of the *Isota's* unique horn, he would drive off.

Mesmerized by this tableau, the other arriving passengers and their waiting family and friends, stood transfixed until the *Isota* whizzed off. Then they would slowly wend their way to their own parked cars, as the show was over for the day.

Trinity Treasures

Sesquicentennial 1849-1999

In celebrating its 150th year with several religious and social events, Trinity Episcopal Church has also released an updated and expanded version of its previous cookbook. There are many great selections submitted mostly by the congregation and leading ladies of the Pass. Recipes by a few good men also make up the list of culinary contributions.

Hosting a tasting party that filled the church hall, were Peggy Hector, Mimi Langguth, and numbers of other ladies who helped serve up and prepare a delightful assortment of more than 50 select dishes.

The 270 page book, with more than 200 recipes, is already in its second printing. It is available at the Church, Come On In!, Botanica Gardens, and Coast Books in Gulfport for $15.

Trinity Church Beginnings

from Wm. Wiegand's History Files

John and Louisa Henderson donated the land for Live Oak Cemetery at Church and St. Louis streets, in addition to the site of Trinity Episcopal Church. The first part of the church was built in 1849, and the transept was built later to accommodate students; boys on one side of the nave, and girls on the other.

The Building Committee was organized in 1848, with the prayerful support of the Reverend William Giles. Committee members were James Saul, William G. Hewes, Richard Swain, R.H. Montgomery, Sheldon Clark, and Edward P. Fourniquette. Contributors included Louisa Henderson, Thomas Kershaw, Thomas A. Dabney, Percival B. McCutchon, Dr. George W. Smith, and Dr. William H. Calvert. The Church Rectory was eventually built in 1892.

Trinity Church's First Rector

The first Rector of Trinity Church was Dr. Thomas Straughton Savage, who was installed on December 1, 1849. At the time, he was recovering in Alabama from the rigors of Africa and the Western Plains. He was a native of Middletown, Connecticut, graduated from Yale in 1825, at age 21, and completed his Medical Degree from Yale in 1833. He further matriculated from Alexandria, Virginia Theological Seminary in 1836. With his bride, Susan Metcalf of Virginia, he went to Liberia, becoming one of the first foreign missionaries of the Protestant Episcopal Church. Shortly afterwards, his wife died and he married Maria Chapin of Vermont on a visit home in 1842. Within the year, she also died while in Africa. The third Mrs. Savage was Elizabeth Rutherford of Rhode Island.

While in Africa, Dr. Savage became very interested in the life of gorillas, and in particular the chimpanzee, of which he wrote a treatise on the intelligence of the ape. For his experiments he is more fully described in the American Encyclopedia of Biographies.

Rev. Savage had taught school in Pass Christian before he was chosen Rector of Trinity Church. His school for a time was regarded as the best in the South with 60 pupils coming predominantly from New Orleans and Mobile.

In 1846, there was another private school with 50 cadets. It was known as the Green Academy headed by Rev. John S. Green and Ashbel Green, an attorney from Philadelphia, whose father was President of Princeton University.

An earlier missionary was the Reverend Abgel Foz who visited during the 1820s. He reported the extensive gambling that was prevalent at the Pass, as retired pirates played high stakes and caroused in the bars and bordellos.

Trinity Forever

Pass Christian was not the place to spend the night of Sunday, August 17, 1969. Devastation to human life and to homes, buildings, and the infrastructure was so bad that it was reported that some of the officials of the Federal site inspection group had conjectured that "the Pass could only be completely bull dozed – and turned into a Federal Memorial Park."

In retrospect, the tragedy of Trinity Episcopal Church, parallels the courage and the spirit of the Pass Christian community in its revival. The church as built originally in 1849, was completely destroyed. The Pastor lost his wife and the caretaker lost thirteen of his family in seeking safety within the sanctuary.

A newly rebuilt church was dedicated on November, 14 1971. With the help of contributions received from all over the world, the church was recreated as nearly as possible to that of the original. With the aid of volunteers from neighboring parishes of the Diocese, remnants of the first church were recovered and reconstituted. Valuable church records, altar vessels, the silver Communion service ensemble and other cherished items were found and refurbished. One of the Celtic crosses, fashioned for the first church nave was restored. Placed in the exterior of the sanctuary onto the opening of the breeze-way is one of the original cypress doors. The original church bell had been stolen and a replica was installed for the dedication. However, just before Christmas of 1971, the original bronze bell was recovered and reinstalled.

Today the church stands as a monument of gratitude to those whose tireless efforts and generosity made it possible. Surrounded by moss laden oaks, it is located just a short distance westerly of its original foundation. The new church also remains as a memorial to those who were killed by Camille's devastation to the Coast. Twelve stained glass windows depict Christ's apostles. Six of these honor the Pastor's wife and five other church women who died in the storm. An outdoor fountain was also dedicated for a deceased parishioner of the Vietnam war.

The City of Pass Christian in its reclamation has numerous monuments to reflect on. However, with the passage of time these monuments have become obscured by new structures, new foliage and many new faces. But it is good to be reminded of the original significance for establishing memo-rials, just as it is significant to pay note to Trinity Church and its pastors who have rendered religious services to the residents of Pass Christian during the past 150 years.

Congratulations to Trinity Episcopal Church, the church leaders, the congregation, and to Rev. Chris Colby, his wife Deborah, and their family.

Historic Markers

The Heritage Committee, headed by Virgil Harris, has announced the unveiling dedication of the first of a series of official "Magnolia Historic Markers." On Tuesday, October 19, 1999, the *"**Pass Christian** Historic Marker"* will be planted on the seawall banquet in front of the Pass Christian Harbor, midway between the BP station and the Chamber of Commerce office.

Pass Christian
Town and Pass (Channel)named for Christian L'Adnier. Early trading center and noted antebellum resort. South's first yacht club began here in 1849. Site of Civil War

Three more markers have been authorized. They are the Livingston, the Henderson's Point, and the Asmard Tract. Each marker costs approximately $1550.00, and when each is approved and shipped by the Mississippi State Archives Department, a dedication site and time will be announced.

The last Historic Markers for the Pass were installed around 1958.

Maritime Histories

Russell Barnes has been gathering data and photos for his upcoming book on schooners of the Gulf Coast -- their makers and their masters. He uncovered that the Lemon family of Ocean Springs and Biloxi originated with James J. Lemon, living here in Pass Christian in the 1880s. He was a merchant who had a schooner built at Wolf River in 1884, which carried lumber, cord wood, and other bulk freight to New Orleans and returned with groceries, dry goods, and other finished products for store merchants along the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

History of Union Quarters - - - Pass Christian

Following the Civil War, the home at 243 East Beach was used as Union Quarters

The preservation and restoration of the integrity of this home keeps it as one of the most historical sites in the Pass.

(Written and researched by Dan Ellis)

Mary Caroline Dewees, wife of Edwin W. Dewees of Red River Parish, LA

On Nov 1, 1871, the "heirs of the Estate of Pierre Saucier" consisted of Jean J. and Sarah L. (Carr) Saucier, Anatole Jacques and Mary Catherine (Walker) Saucier, Pierre Saucier, Francois Napoleon and Mary Louise (Orr) Saucier, and Evariste Marie Saucier. The 93-foot lot with the spacious Saucier manor was sold to Mary Caroline Dewees for $4000. By the agreement, possession would take place upon full payment of the notes payable with the condition that the sellers would keep the house insured from harm and damage. Ramon Lizana, a brother-in-law of Pierre Sr., owned the property to the East while the property on the West was sold to John Bordage. The Gulf front house lot reached north to Back Road, which was also known as Second Street.

On March 26, 1873, Anatole J. & Mary C. Saucier sold a 65-foot lot on the north side of Back Road extending 460-feet deep to Edwin W. Dewees, Mary's husband, for $1000. It was bounded by Evariste Marie Saucier on the West; Augusta Necaise at the North; and a 12-foot wide alleyway that reached to the railroad right-of-way on the East. On July 19, 1873, a group consisting of W.A. Champlin, his wife, Margaret; George N. Smith, his wife, Seignora M.; and Elliot Henderson, sold a 77-foot wide lot extending northward by 33 arpents deep for $300 to Edwin DeWees. A French arpent measures approximately 200 feet. It fronted south on the railroad right-of-way and was bounded on the east by Ramon Lizana, on the north by Elliot Henderson, and on the west by the heirs of Pierre Saucier.

On September 29, 1874, Philip Mallini sold 15 acres measuring 703' by 1300' located on the southern shores of Bayou Portage to Mary Dewees for $1000.

To complete her aggressive interest in land purchases, for $25 on December 1, 1874, Mary Dewees purchased a 12-foot wide lot fronting on Second Street that extended 475-feet deep from A.J. and Catherine Saucier.

In an apparent display of love and affection, on December 11, 1874, Edwin W. Dewees transferred his ownership of the above described two lots to his wife, Mary C. Dewees.

In researching deed transfers, it was very common for husbands to convey their property rights to their spouses. This tradition carries forward even today.

Not withstanding her accumulation of property, Mary Caroline made four more purchases indicating her continued interest in Pass Christian. Between April 24, 1875 and October 15, 1875, she picked up a 12' wide by 225' deep lot from Anatole and Mary Saucier; a 50' wide lot by 430' deep from Ramon and Medard Lizana for $200; a 71' wide lot by 200' deep from Theofil and Amelia B. Saucier for $225; and 100 acres north of Pass Christian corporate limits from Elliot and Fanny Henderson for $1000. With further opportunities, in 1876 she acquired from the Widow Anna Marie Jennings a 400' wide by 1082' deep lot for $200 and another 400' by 50' lot from Ramon and Medard Lizana for $200.

On January 2, 1880, Mary finally was able to complete her bulk land holdings by buying the 60-foot lot adjoining her home on the west from the heirs of John Bordage.

Not much is known about Mary Caroline Dewees other than that she arrived from Louisiana's Red River country to make Pass Christian her home for a period of 10 years. Perhaps her husband had died, when she decided to sell the great home and move to Farmville, Virginia. On October 29, 1885 she sold the beautiful mansion to Louisa Jane Bidwell of New Orleans. Through succeeding years even after moving to Connecticut, she eventually relieved herself of her other land holdings. It would be supposed that with her strong desire to amass such a large tract of property, that she more than likely performed some remodeling to the large home during her ten year residential stay.

*(To be continued in next issue with the ownership of **Mrs. Louisa Jane Bidwell, wife of David Bidwell of New Orleans***

But Let that Old Oak Stand

by Bailey Vinson

My heartstrings they cling
Close as thy bark old friend;
Here shall the wild birds sing
And swarthy branches bend.

Old tree! The storm is brave,
As woodmen leave the spot;
While I have hand to save
The axe shall harm you not.

The above poem was written on a ledger sheet perhaps sometime before 1898. It was found by the Hoffmans while restoring their home at 243 East Beach, the *Union Quarters.*

Cemetery Clean-up

It's that time of year for everyone to clean up the area's cemeteries. Everyone means even those who do not have relatives to bring gardening and cleaning tools to attend to the unattended grave sites. **See you Saturday, Oct. 30, 1999.**

Founding Member Enrollments

are being taken now. Anyone wishing to donate $100, or more, and receive a tax write-off, should make their check payable to the **Rotary Trust Fund,** *care of Lighthouse*. Such payments includes membership in the Lighthouse Society.

Also: Checks *or Pledges* of $50 are being taken now to be a Founding Member of the Pass Christian Lighthouse Society. The new charter will go into effect starting January 2000.

To: Tricentennial Committee/Lighthouse

I, We, pledge $_____(Min $50)
Name:_____
Address:_____
City, St, ZIP: _____
Mail to: POBox 354, PCMS,39571

Devil's Elbow at Henderson Point Highway 90 Overpass Update

Construction on the new Bridge/Overpass at Henderson Point is well on its way to completion.

Charles Melson, President of the Henderson Point - Pass Christian Isles Civic Association and Editor of its Newsletter, reported on the update following his query of the Boh Bros., on-site Superintendent.

With the project completion date in sight, vehicles will soon be channeled along the east side (inside the curve) of the bridge, but continuing to maintain two-way traffic for a few more months. Both sides will then be opened while project completions are completed into the final phase.

Completions will include tying in the roadways and turnoffs from cross streets and installing traffic control lights, before performing the final phase of removing the old bridge. According to the emergency funding legislation, the new bridge was a replacement, therefore the old bridge must be torn down even though there were requests to keep it for local service.

The Civic Association has requested that the bridge be named for Gerald Roux, former activist of the Isles and the Point.

Boys and Girls Club

The Pass Christian Unit of the Boys and Girls Clubs of the Gulf Coast have established a fixed schedule for their meeting dates and times for the second Thursday of each month at 6 p.m. Those interested in supporting this worthy community project are urged to attend Thursday, October 14, 1999, in the Pass Christian Middle School Library. The Middle School is located at 315 Clark Avenue just north of the railroad.

Reminder!

Dedication Ceremony

Everyone is alerted to turnout for the unveiling ceremony of the first of the series of Historic Markers. 11: A.M. at the Pass Christian Harbor on Tuesday, Oct. 19, 1999.

Collage Update!

With a wonderful weather-made-to-order, weekend, tents were strewn along the Memorial Park pathways displaying a great semblance of mosaic beauty. Artists and craftsmen showed their works as strands of '40s music filled the air while coast breezes swept over an appreciative audience.

Brian Nettles has become even more famous since he established his business on Davis Ave., he won the "Overall First Place Award" for his beautiful sculpted artwork that was both, statuesque and colorfully rendered.

At the W. Beach mansion preview party, everyone was happy for the decision.

Congratulations, Brian!

1895 History Notes

In Harrison County, even though Henderson's Point was listed as a separate town, it did not maintain an adequate quantity of residents to post a population count in the County listing.

The largest towns were Biloxi, with 3,234, and Pass Christian, with 1,705, (as compared to Hancock's Bay St. Louis, which had 1,974 residents). The town of Gulfport which was not yet incorporated, had 79, while its two sister cities, now part of Gulfport, were Handsboro, with 1,021 people and Mississippi City had 534. Incidently, at that time, MS City was the county seat for Harrison.

CHIEF MONIAC

Moniac was an Indian chief from Alabama who had been decorated by General Washington while in New York, and was reportedly buried in Pass Christian in 1837.

Every year, treasure hunters and other interested parties call the Pass Christian City Hall, the Library, or the Chamber of Commerce seeking information. One of these was the following.

Presumably during the 1950s, Professor Wilbur W. Stout of the English Department of Mississippi Southern University wrote to the Pass Christian Chamber of Commerce asking for the location of an 1837 *Pass Christian Cemetery*.

In his letter, he quoted the historian Thomas E. Woodard, who wrote, "I have often seen a medal General Washington gave Moniac. He always kept it on his person, and it is with him in his grave at Pass Christian."

"He reportedly had a plantation near Montgomery, Alabama, and another at Manack (a variant spelling of Moniac) and owned an island in the Alabama River called Moniac. He raised range cattle on his properties as early as 1799."

"He was married to Betsy, a sister of Red Eagle (William Weatherford). Their son David Moniac, born in 1802, was the first West Point graduate from Alabama. Attaining rank of Major in the United States Army, he was killed at the *Battle of Wahoo Swamp* on November 21, 1836."

"Sam Moniac's father was William, a native of Holland, and his mother was Polly Colbert, whose name connects her with James Logan Colbert (1736-1784), the Scottish leader of the Chickasaw nation."

"Sam Moniac was mentioned during the Creek War of 1813-14, being the guide who led U.S. Army Brigadier General Ferdinand Leigh Claiborne to make the attack at *Holy Ground* between Montgomery and Selma near the town of Benton."

Local lore has it that Chief Moniac actually did come to the Pass about 1837, which incidently was about the same time as the Trail of Tears.

William Wiegand was one of the founders and a chartering officer of the Pass Christian Historical Society. Much of the foregoing information was extracted from the Wiegand Historical Collection notes. He reported that, there was a grave discovered at the site of the old Lynne Castle Hotel, where silver adornment artifacts were taken out. "The silver ovals, that were believed to be epaulets, actually were medals of the kind shown in portraits of chiefs such as appear in the Oklahoma museum and in the volume on art collectors entitled *The Proud Possessors*."

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The Tricentennial

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